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Defense Doesn't Plan to Use Lie Detectors, However...

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Top Pentagon civilians "have no intention" of using lie detectors on a "widespread, regular" basis to plug leaks to the press, but "the security people might change minds," Henry E. Catto Jr. said in an interview about future information policies at defense.

Catto, as assistant secretary for public affairs, oversees release of information about the military and advises Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger on policies designed to curb unauthorized disclosures.

Catto said such disclosures to the press have "gotten out of hand," but the Reagan administration has not decided what to do about it. However, rules restricting use of lie-detector tests in the government are under review at the Pentagon, raising the possibility that the administration will try to expand their use.

"The game of using the press to influence policy before decisions are made has, I think, really hurt the ability of the people in this building to enjoy frank and open discussion because you just don't know what's going to leak," Catto said in an interview Friday.

"I mean, if you all thought that every editorial board meeting of The Washington Post was going to be on the front page of The Journal or The Times the next day, it would inhibit your freedom to plan and discuss

what stories you're going to work on. It would be a difficult situation, and that's the situation we're in."

Deputy Defense Secretary Frank C. Carlucci ordered lie-detector tests in an unsuccessful attempt to find out who told The Washington Post about secret Defense Resources Board discussions Jan. 7, where it was revealed that the forces the Joint Chiefs of Staff wanted to carry out civilian defense policies would cost \$750 billion on top of the \$1.5 trillion projected for fiscal year 1984 through 1988.